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Supes Vote to Keep UGH Closed to Cars On Weekends 3 More Years

By Thomas K. Pendergast

For the next three years, the Upper Great Highway (UGH) between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard will remain closed to cars from noon on Fridays to 6 a.m. on Mondays, despite pushback from two westside supervisors.

An ordinance put in the Recreation and Park Department code, which controls that stretch of roadway, will ban private vehicles on a "pilot basis" during weekends and holidays until Dec. 31, 2025.

The ordinance was sponsored by District 4 Supervisor Gordon Mar.

"The climate is changing and so will the Great Highway," Mar told the Board of Supervisors in December. "The roadway south of Sloat must and will be closed to cars as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation (Project), a plan in the works for decades at this point."

Mar says this allows car commuters access to the road when they need it most, while preserving the promenade when cyclists and pedestrians use it most.

"I think this is a best-of-both-worlds scenario. By including Friday afternoons, we give some access to the promenade for those who work on weekends," he said. "This legislation is a genuine compromise, and this is a compromise we reached with Mayor Breed more than a year ago in August of 2021. This ordinance simply allows it to continue," he said. "If this ordinance is not passed, the weekend promenade will end and the Great Highway will return to a 24/7 roadway for cars, when the declaration of emergency ends early next year."

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'Goooooooooal!!'

A crowd of more than 3,000 soccer fans gathered at the JFK Promenade near the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park on Sunday morning, Dec. 18, to watch the stunning finale of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The match between Argentina and France kept the audience members on the edge of their seats until the last moment, culminating in a nail-biting victory for Argentina and Lionel Messi after nearly three hours of play. ***Photo by Jim Watkins (SF Rec. and Park).***

Court Orders CEQA Review of SI's Sports Stadium Lights

By Thomas K. Pendergast

The controversy about the 90-foot-tall stadium lights at St. Ignatius College Preparatory high school in the Outer Sunset is on again, since an appeals court ruled that the City was wrong to exempt it from environmental review.

In June of 2020, the San Francisco Planning Department determined that the new lights were exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the "project does not entail the construction of a new stadium or the expansion of the existing playing surface. The project would not expand the existing bleachers or increase the stadium's capacity. The proposed lights would primarily shift the school's existing use of the field to later times in the day and/or days of the week…," according to a published opinion from the First District Court of Appeal.

The City further argued that the project was also exempt from environmental review because CEQA guidelines allowed this for "limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures."

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors affirmed the department's determination that the lights were exempt from CEQA review.

Prior to the new lights being installed, the school used temporary stadium lights for approximately 40 to 50 evenings a year. With the permanent lights, this would increase to up to 150 evenings a year.

Neighbors living around the school organized the Saint Ignatius Neighborhood Association (SINA) and filed a lawsuit

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'Facing the Future' Exhibit at de Young Promotes Healing

By Noma Faingold

South African artist Lhola Amira looks at the exhibition titled, "Lhola Amira: Facing the Future," as an invitation by the de Young Museum. In turn, the artist invites visitors to a safe space to examine the pain of the past and present, specifically of Black and Brown people, while embracing the possibilities of healing.

Amira, 38, who uses the capitalized pronouns THEY/THEM/THEIR/OUR, has created (in THEIR first solo exhibition in the United States), an enigmatic presentation incorporating hanging, shimmering beaded sculptures (panels) to walk through, gaze at and touch. There is a visually stunning short film, "Irmandade: The Shape of Water in Pindorama," which asks the viewer to "witness the wounds of ocean and land."

The multi-media, multi-dimensional exhibit, which opened at the de Young Museum on Dec. 17 and runs through Dec. 3, 2023, also has haunting music and tactile symbolic objects, while sharing galleries with the museum's historical collection of African art. It intentionally connects the past to the present.

"The past is always present and can rupture the future," Amira said. "If we do not fully engage it, there are dangers of it repeating itself. That the past can also be a place from which we can imagine from and through. Maybe the past is a long overdue love letter to this moment of how we can do living better, or the things we can look out for to ease the damage."

Melvin Phillips said he felt "spiritually and physically uplifted" after Amira washed his feet at the Dec. 15 pre-opening event for the "Lhola Amira: Facing the Future" exhibit at the de Young Museum. ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

On the evening of Dec. 15, the de Young held an unusual pre-opening reception for donors, media and other invited guests. On the typical side, there was food and drink, mingling, opening remarks by Thomas P. Campbell, director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and by curator of African art, Natasha Becker, along with self-guided viewing of the exhibit. However, more memorable was the welcoming ceremony, helmed by Amira, for nine pre-selected Bay Area participants from African American and indigenous communities.

A large circle was set up at the center of the museum's expansive lobby space. Each participant sat on their own comfortable upholstered bench. Objects at their feet included a metal basin, a pitcher of water, a pair of red socks and a lit candle. Amira, a statuesque presence in a layered white garment, a towering red head-

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Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Gladiator Statue

Is the naked bronze man with a cape and helmet in Golden Gate Park's Music Concourse Roman or Greek?

The base of the bronze statue has the inscription "Georges Geefs," who was a member of the 19th century Belgian family of artists. Another inscription on the base, "Cie des Bronzes," is an abbreviated name of the foundry that cast the statue, Compagnie des Bronzes, in Brussels, capital of Belgium. Also inscribed are the year 1881 and the artistic method "cire perdue" or "lost wax."

The process of making a bronze sculpture, as described by the Victoria and Albert Museum, begins with the artist's wax model of the art piece. The wax model is a guide for creating a plaster mold that's the inverse of the wax model (then the original wax model is discarded). Hot wax is poured into the plaster mold sections to recreate the outer layer of the original model in sections. Then the cooled wax shell is filled with a mixture of sand and plaster, while outside pins and wax rods are added along with coats of plaster, except for a hole in the bottom. In the heat of a kiln, the wax shell and rods melt and drain through the hole, but the plaster mold keeps its form as held by the pins; turning the plaster mold upside down allows molten bronze to be poured to fill the void left in the plaster mold. After the bronze solidifies, the plaster mold is broken open by the artisan, and the bronze rods formed around the art piece are removed.

The sculpture was previously exhibited at various expositions, including in Brussels in 1880, Amsterdam in 1883 and at the World Columbian Exposition of 1883 in Chicago, according to Hugo Lettens writing in "La Sculpture belge au 19ème siècle."

A parade before the Midwinter Exposition groundbreaking marched from the Golden Gate Park Panhandle's eastern tip to the Music Concourse, the future fair site. The sculpture was installed in its present location to commemorate the groundbreaking of the Exposition on Aug. 24, 1893. The sculpture's pedestal plaque states:

The gladiator statue on the north side of Golden Gate Park's Music Concourse was placed to commemorate the inauguration of the California Midwinter International Exposition. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

In Commemoration of the Inauguration of the California Midwinter International Exposition On this spot the first shovelful of earth was turned with ceremonies on August 24th, 1893.

The Exposition would open on Jan. 27, 1894, for six months. It was the first international exposition west of the Mississippi River.

At the time of the Midwinter Exposition, more than 300,000 people were living in San Francisco, but less than 50 years earlier (pre-Gold Rush), fewer than 250 people were living here, according to Dr. William Lipsky in the book "Images of America: San Francisco's Midwinter Exposition."

A silver case contained earth shoveled in by director-general of the Exposition, Michael Henry de Young, and additional coins were auctioned on that groundbreaking day for $650. The crowd "cheered very lustily" when Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger acknowledged the contractors who started working on the construction that very day. Shipbuilder Irving Murray Scott noted in his speech that the Exposition would mark a new industrial era in the history of California. The San Francisco Chronicle estimated that 40,000 people were in the Music Concourse with 60,000 in total, including those in surrounding hills and valleys who were too far away to hear the speeches in the bandstand, in the reporter's judgment.

While the statue today is referred to as the Roman Gladiator Sculpture on the Golden Gate Park 150th anniversary website, an 1880 Belgian catalog uses a different French description: "Léonidas aux Thermopyles, exhortant ses soldats au combat," or "Leonidas at Thermopylae exhorting his troops to battle." Also, Lipsky referred to the statue as part of the Exposition's "Fair of King Leonidas of Sparta." The statue depicts King Leonidas from the ancient Greek city state of Sparta. Leonidas is famous for holding out with his 300 Spartan soldiers during a heroic last stand to defend the narrow pass of Thermopylae against a much larger invading Persian force in the year 480 BCE for a few days before succumbing to the Persians. (Ancient Greek sources mention several hundred other Greek soldiers defending the pass at various stages of the battle before being dismissed by Leonidas or surrendering to the Persians, according to Michael A. Flower's article "Simonides, Ephorus, and Herodotus on the Battle of Thermopylae.")

Research by Christopher Pollock, historian in residence at the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, confirmed that the Roman Gladiator and Leonidas statue are one and the same.

The bronze statue and granite pedestal together are 11 feet, 3 inches tall, according to the San Francisco Arts Commission. The statue depicts a caped Leonidas holding his sword up high with his right arm. Leonidas's gaze over his right shoulder is in the opposite direction as his outstretched left arm, possibly gesturing at the Persian invaders.

The sculpture is on the northern part of the Music Concourse, across the street from the de Young Museum.

Last month's column unfortunately contained an error. Here is the correct information: The Sharon Quarters playground (now known as Koret Children's Quarters) opened on Dec. 22, 1888, and the carousel pavilion was built in 1892, according to Christopher Pollock, the historian in residence at the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

Lincoln H.S. Football Team Wins Another State Championship

The Abraham Lincoln High School football team captured the CIF Division 7-A state championship with a decisive 54-6 victory over Crenshaw-Los Angeles at Kezar Stadium on Dec. 10.

Ricky Underwood and Jamelle Newman combined for 337 rushing yards and five touchdowns, leading Lincoln to its third state championship in five seasons.

The rain was a deciding factor in Lincoln's game plan to only run the ball. The team earned 437 rushing yards while not throwing a single pass.

The Mustangs stopped Crenshaw's seven-game winning streak in which they averaged nearly 50 points per game.

Letter to the Editor

Editor:

Ever imagine floors of a taxpayer-funded university library being closed to access, except to card-bearers, on the basis of undefined "security concerns?" Floors that have offered access to the intellectually inquisitive, those in need of a tranquil space to think and write, and a place where locals could re-connect; these floors are now rendered inaccessible.

Access to the UCSF library was the reason why many of us moved to the Inner Sunset. Slowly but surely, access to the library has been shrinking. The Blumenthal Asian Reading Room, almost a museum, was turned into a computer lab – an incalculable loss. The wonderful second floor – which afforded inspirational vistas, great lighting and wide tables – was transformed into classrooms. All without any community conversation!

Now, using the cover of COVID to implement Naomi Klein-style "Shock Doctrine" tactics, the UCSF administration has decided, without any recent neighborhood input, to bar access to two of the three remaining floors. This was done for "security concerns." These security concerns cannot be released because of "privacy concerns." Orwell much?

While no actual facts about the real motives are being made public, it is very likely that a very few unhoused individuals visiting the library generated visual annoyance by their innocuous presence, shocking students from sheltered backgrounds. So, once more we all have to suffer because of the elitist war on the down-and-out.

Systemic racism is part and parcel of the university's history, so it is no surprise that this long-desired restriction would be put into place. We need to save neighborhood access!

When the library reopens, anyone without a card will be confined to third-floor cubicles set near a noisy coffee shop.

Harry S. Pariser

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The Sunset Beacon
January 2023 - Volume 32, No. 7
P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116 ph: 415-706-6428
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RichmondSunsetNews.com
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PEOPLE OF Parkside SUNSET

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our newly elected representative for District 4 on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors

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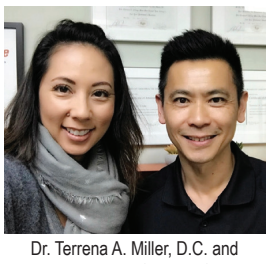

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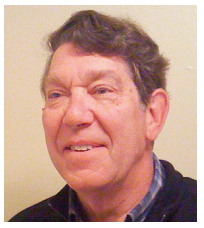
Commentary



Paul Kozakiewicz

Battle for Park Access is Over

The November election is over and the final results have been certified. From now on, the eastern end of John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park will be closed to vehicle traffic, except for deliveries to the de Young Museum, first responders and the park shuttle. The Upper Great Highway will also be closed on weekends starting at noon on Fridays, per a vote of the SF Board of Supervisors in December, until a study can be completed and final action taken.

The political campaign to defeat Proposition I, which would have kept JFK Drive and the Upper Great Highway open to vehicle traffic, and to pass Proposition J, which would ban most vehicles, was well organized and well run.

My house in the Sunset got a door hanger and two direct mailers opposing Prop. I and supporting Prop. J. There were also advertisements running on network television.

For about the same money, the proponents of Prop. I could have bought a BMW, but couldn't afford the gas. I saw nothing but hard-working, dedicated volunteers on the front lines.

A special thanks to disability advocate Howard Chabner and Richmond resident and retired police commander Richard Corriea for sponsoring Prop. I. Unfortunately, taking the moral high ground doesn't always result in election victories.

Citywide, Prop. I garnered only 35% of the vote. In District 1, only 43% of voters supported the measure to restore park roads back to pre-epidemic levels, and in District 4, 47% did so.

Concerning Prop. J, only the Sunset, Parkside and Portola districts and Lincoln Park in the Richmond District voted "no."

The voters have spoken and now we have to do the best job possible implementing the new plan. But there was a lot to be gleaned from this political exercise, including:

• It is not a "San Francisco value" to use a pandemic to force permanent changes on the City's transportation system. These important decisions would normally go through proper channels, including proper environmental review. The current plan limits access to Golden Gate Park's cultural institutions and other park features for seniors, the disabled and families with young children.

• SF Supervisor Connie Chan's resolution temporarily banning vehicles from park roadways got away from her, leading to a majority of her fellow progressive supervisors and the mayor to make the move permanent.

• "Poison pills" can be effective. It only took four members of the SF Board of Supervisors to put Prop. J on the ballot, a measure designed to compete with Prop. I.

• The mayor is no friend of the cultural institutions in the park or of westside residents who have to live with the consequences of her decision to sign legislation banning vehicles from JFK Drive.

• The SF Recreation and Park Department either has no respect for the First Amendment and the public's right to know or is just plain incompetent. All of the public record requests and questions I made to staff were ignored or inadequately answered.

(A San Francisco department head or employee accused of denying or ignoring a public records request knows it is turned over to the Sunshine Task Force for investigation. If the offending entity is eventually found guilty, a report is turned over to the SF Ethics Commission which conducts its own investigation before making a judgment, usually with minor enforcement consequences.)

• Truth is the first casualty in a political campaign, such as claiming JFK Drive was extremely dangerous and a part of the City's "high injury network."

• The SF Bicycle Coalition and Walk SF – two nonprofits that get about $1 million a year from the SF Municipal Transportation Agency's budget (SFMTA) – are nothing more than lobbyists propping up the SFMTA's plans. The two organizations led the effort to keep the park roadways vehicle-free.

The Bicycle Coalition and Walk SF have sole-source contracts, meaning no other nonprofit can compete for the City's business. It's a highly specialized service, teaching children how to ride a bike and navigating dangerous obstacles while walking.

• Ugly social media trolls, oftentimes name-calling and shaming anonymously, do not foster civil debate.

Meanwhile, the battle to dismantle the City's transportation grid has only just begun.

Since the election, two new proposals have popped up. One would remove the elevated Central Freeway that runs between Market Street and Highway 101 to free up space for housing. The other would remove all vehicle traffic along the Embarcadero to create a pedestrian walkway.

New Supe in Town

It's hola to new District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio and adios to former District 4 Supervisor Gordon Mar.

Mar was a good supervisor who did a lot for the Sunset, but his uncompromising style might have cost him crucial votes.

Good luck to new Supervisor Engardio as he continues the important work already in progress, especially fighting to secure water from Lake Merced (and hopefully the Pacific Ocean) for fire fighting after a major earthquake.

Two businesses Mar nominated for the City's Legacy Business Registry were approved in December. They join 340 other businesses on the Registry that have been serving the public for at least 30 years.

The Registry, which is managed by the SF Office of Small Business and overseen by Director Katy Tang, a former District 4 supervisor, "recognizes longstanding, community-serving businesses as valuable cultural assets to the City."

Kudos to the Peking Restaurant, 1375 Noriega St., and Artisians of San Francisco, 2549 Irving St., for their long-time service to the residents of the Sunset and Parkside districts.

Paul Kozakiewicz is an editor and former publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers.

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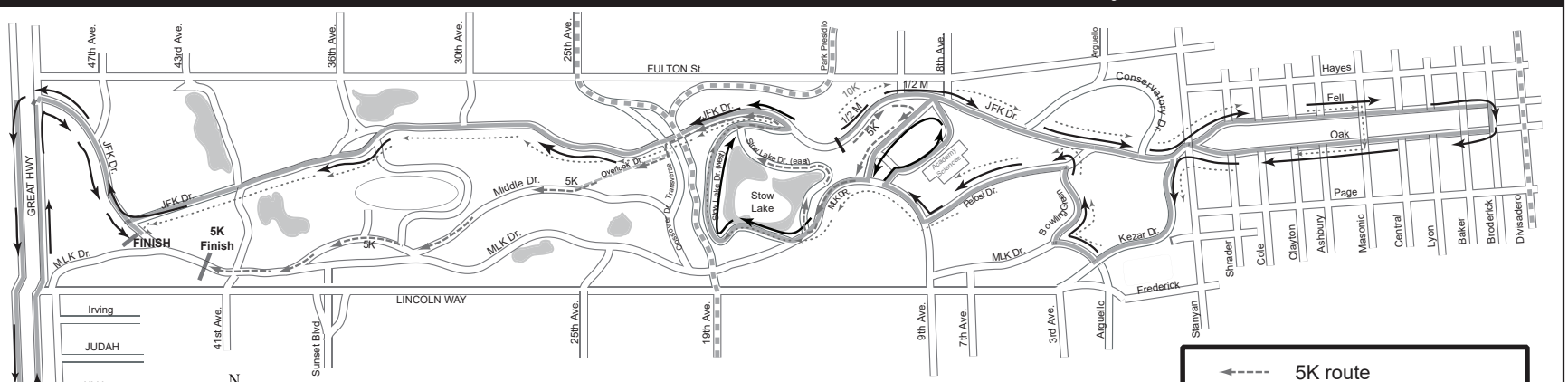

Sunday, February 5, 2023
Golden Gate Park • 7:55 AM START
ROAD CLOSURES AND DETOUR INFORMATION

PANHANDLE CLOSURES - 7:15 AM to 10:00 AM
Oak St. & **Fell St.** will be closed from Broderick to Stanyan. **Broderick, Baker, Masonic** and **Stanyan Streets** will be closed between Page Street and Hayes Street (local access for residents will be allowed up to Fell St. or Oak St.)
DETOUR - USE DIVISADERO for through traffic NORTH OR SOUTH

GOLDEN GATE PARK CLOSURES
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Real Estate

John M. Lee

2022 Sunset RE in Review

The Sunset District's single-family median home prices finally took a dip after rising 10 years in a row with median prices declining by .3% and the number of sales by 10.7% in 2022.

But these numbers do not tell the whole story as the market was a tale of two halves. The Sunset Home Sales Comparison Table shows the results in 2022 as compared with prior years broken up by quarters.

The data were gathered from the San Francisco Association of Realtors' Multiple Listing Service and consist of single-family home sales in the Sunset, Parkside and Golden Gate Heights areas.

In 2022, there were 460 sales versus 515 for 2021 and 428 for 2020, a decrease of 10.7% year-over-year and an increase of 7.5 % over 2020. The median sales price decreased .3% to $1.7 million from 2021 to 2022 while it went up 12.9% from 2020 to 2021. The amount of marketing time to sell a home is about 11-13 days for 2020, 2021 and 2022, all indicating a very good market. However, these annual numbers do not tell the whole story.

If you analyze the attached chart, it shows that a majority of the sales occurred in the first half of 2022 and all the appreciation was in the first six months. In the last half of the year, sales slowed, and median prices dropped from $1.85 million to $1.5 million, a decrease of about 19%. To put that into perspective, we are back to 2020 median prices, so we lost about two years of appreciation.

In 2022, the major stock indexes fell about 8-31% at the writing of this article, with a downward trend and high volatility throughout the year. The consumer confidence index dipped and rose slightly at the end of the year.

Our unemployment rate has come down from the high reached at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently at about 4% in California and 2% in San Francisco.

The interest rate has gone up from about 3% at the beginning of the year to 7% at the end of the year for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage.

Inflation was in the 8% range but is currently moderating. The foreclosure of homes is still virtually non-existent; however, the delinquency rate for mortgages is rising, which will inevitably lead to foreclosures.

Our real estate market did very well at the beginning of the year with multiple offers and bidding above asking prices, then slowed down starting in about May, coinciding with the rise in interest rates. The Feds, in an effort to slow down inflation, started increasing the fed funds rates by .25% in March, then .5% in May, and then more aggressive increases of .75% from June to November, and another .5% in December for a total of 4.2% in 2022. They signaled at the end of the year that there will be another .75% increase coming up in 2023. The amount of increase translates roughly to about 20-25% less borrowing power for buyers.

An interesting question often asked is, "Why did buyers choose to purchase at the beginning of the year knowing that prices will come down?" The answer lies in that they can lock in at those historically low interest rates for 30 years, thus the reason for the bidding wars at the beginning of the year. Now that the market has turned, buyers can pay a lower price for homes, but their monthly payments might be the same or higher.

Locally, the demand in San Francisco and the Sunset District will continue to be OK. It looks like interest rates are plateauing right about here. The refinance market has dried up and purchases are down, so the competition for funds is lower now, which can cause interest rates to actually decrease a bit.

My prediction for 2023 is that we will continue to have a slower real estate market than previous years. It will be a very balanced market with more negotiating power to the buyers. Inventory will be pretty tight as owners who do not have to sell will probably elect to hold onto their properties until the market gets better.

Therefore, if you are contemplating buying into the real estate market, there will be opportunities. If you are planning on selling, keep in mind that there is a short supply and, if priced and marketed correctly, you should still get a pretty good price. If you want to reposition your real estate portfolio, this is an excellent time to do it and take advantage of less competition.

Wishing you all a happy new year and all the best in 2023!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com.

SUNSET HOME SALES COMPARISON

(By Quarter)

2020

# of Sales	Average Price	Median Price	Days on Market
76	$1,529,807	$1,477,500	14
77	1,569,117	1,505,000	12
119	1,640,550	1,525,000	13
156	1,629,899	1,550,000	13
428	**1,604,152**	**1,510,500**	**13**
*13.5%**	*1.9%**	*.7%**	*-7.1%**

2021

# of Sales	Average Price	Median Price	Days on Market
92	$1,702,355	$1,550,000	10
140	1,831,729	1,750,000	10
152	1,912,923	1,775,000	11
131	1,844,512	1,700,000	12
515	**1,835,523**	**1,705,000**	**11**
*20.3%**	*14.4%**	*12.9%**	*-15.4%**

2022

# of Sales	Average Price	Median Price	Days on Market
97	1,885,623	1,800,000	11
153	1,976,769	1,900,000	12
123	1,651,598	1,500,000	14
87	1,620,391	1,505,000	15
460	**1,800,206**	**1,700,000**	**13**
*-10.7%**	*-1.9%**	*-.3%**	*18.2%**

* Percent change from previous year.

SI Lights

Continued from page 1

against the City, saying the department wrongly exempted the project from CEQA review.

But a trial court disagreed and decided in favor of the City. SINA appealed that decision.

The appeals court, however, sided with SINA and used examples from the state's Resources Agency for its 3-0 ruling.

"While the state Resources Agency has determined that any potential impacts associated with 'small' new residential or commercial structures are ordinarily not significant, this determination does not reasonably apply to the light standards here," said the Court of Appeal. "The light standards, at 90 feet tall, are significantly taller than any other structure in the neighborhood.

"In comparison, homes in the area are typically 20- to 25-feet tall, the City's zoning ordinance limits residential building in the area to 40-feet tall and typical streetlights are only 25- to 30-feet tall…. In short, a 90-foot-tall light standard does not qualify as 'small' within the meaning of the exemption.

"We therefore conclude that neither exemption from CEQA review relied on by the City applies."

The appeals court elaborated on the details of its ruling.

"The purpose here for enforcing the environmental analysis required by CEQA is not necessarily to kill the project, but to require the careful consideration of measures that will mitigate the environmental impacts of the project," according to its published opinion. "There is evidence that the proposed light standards may have light, noise and traffic impacts on the neighborhood. Although the City has imposed conditions designed to address these concerns, the neighborhood citizens are entitled to have the sufficiency of these conditions scrutinized in accordance with CEQA standards and, if deemed necessary, enforceable limitation imposed."

Some of the neighbors living near Saint Ignatius College Preparatory High School felt the new stadium lights installed at the school's athletic fields were having a negative impact on the neighborhood. They appealed a trial court's decision giving the school an exemption from needing an environmental impact review required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The appeals court recently sided with the neighbors. *Courtesy photo.*

"We're very pleased that the court saw the logic of our argument," said Deborah Brown, a spokesperson for SINA. "Our lawyer was very, very clear that, while the school has the right to put up the lights, they did it without proper CEQA review. And these are lights that the neighbors, the entire neighborhood association, about 165 neighbors, will have to live with for the rest of our lives.

"They're 90-feet tall and they're in use 150 nights a year. Whereas before they weren't used that much at all. They had temporary lights," Brown said. "So, this has impacts. This has impacts on noise with the events, on the light brightness, and so there needs to be a CEQA review and the court agreed with us."

While the lights can stay up for now, the school and the department are required to implement an environmental review on the impacts of the stadium lights under CEQA regulations, according to SINA.

"We are disappointed in the outcome and are evaluating any potential next steps," said Jen Kwart, spokesperson for City Attorney David Chiu, according to media reports.

Chiu could ask the state Supreme Court to review the ruling.

A spokesperson for the school, Tom Murphy, declined to comment at this time, explaining that this lawsuit was between SINA and the City.

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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Practitioners of Political Witlessness

Herbert Hoover was the first U.S. president to give his salary back to the government (after the Great Depression commenced in his first year of office in October, 1929). Now the U.S. government would like everyone to do it!

Not only are Harvard University professors and administrators searching for a new president for the 2023-24 academic year, but also the chief diversity and inclusion officer (a mighty position). A gender marker is required of all employees, but this summer a "nonbinary" option is allowed because LGBTQ civil rights are assertedly threatened. That's not true in San Francisco, but maybe Cambridge, Massachusetts is different. (That should surprise anyone who's resided or done business in Cambridge.) If anyone's civil rights are at issue in Cambridge, it's Asian-Americas applicants to Harvard who sued Harvard for discrimination against such applicants. "Asian" represents an identification which includes Indians, Koreans, Japanese, Cambodians, Laotian and Chinese – 60% of the world's population.

Fortunately, the oral arguments last October in suits by Asian applicants to Harvard and the University of North Carolina reached the U.S. Supreme Court which allege racial discrimination in admission indicate a majority of the justices will opine that colleges' use of race for purposes of "diversity" is unconstitutional. That's what California voters did Nov. 5, 1996, regarding an initiative entitled "Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment" after the legislature rejected such concept in favor of "affirmative action."

In 2020, California voters rejected Secretary of State Shirley Weber's effort to repeal the California Constitution clause (Article I, Sec. 31) which governs state and local education, employment and contracting. As William McGurn noted in the Aug. 23, 2022, Wall Street Journal, "... is it too much to hope that a student could fill out a college application without worrying that his grades and hard work might all be naught if he checks the wrong racial box?"

It's not only academia which now invokes racial boxes; it now poisons City Hall, as shown last month by the SF Elections Commission's announced intent not to re-hire the 20-year director, John Arntz, for reasons of "racial equity," ignoring the honest and efficient management over elections with tens of candidates for public offices, barrages of local and state ballot measures, plus hundreds of printed handbooks with "pro" and "con" arguments and receiving and tallying votes. These practitioners of political witlessness had their ears boxed by Mayor London Breed and a spate of intelligent supervisors demanding Arntz' retention. Intellectual honesty prevailed; John Arntz remains director for four more years.

The bedraggled San Francisco Chronicle, with its circulation declin-

Continued on page 10

SF SYMPHONY

LUNAR NEW YEAR

YEAR OF THE RABBIT

FEBRUARY 5, 5:00PM

Welcome the Year of the Rabbit with the San Francisco Symphony! Join friends old and new for this much-loved annual celebration of music and community at Davies Symphony Hall.

Enhance your experience by reserving a Lunar New Year package, which includes special festivities and a stylish banquet. For more information, please call the **SF Symphony Events Department** at **415.503.5351**.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stance on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of points of views. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Felton Institute, a non-profit social services provider, has an opening for a community liaison: The part-time temporary position is with the Community Liaison Program, Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS). Job duties: Provide technical assistance by teaching basic computer skills on a smart device (smartphone, tablet or laptop). Skills include downloading and using the Zoom app, teaching Google Services, as well as navigating the internet to access resources helpful for daily living. Enjoy working with older adults and people with disabilities. Proficient in Cantonese and English. Send resume to Jobs@felton.org.

ESL Instructor Part-time Temporary Contract Position from January-May 2023
Love to sing? Felton Institute is hiring an ESL instructor to teach a Basic Literacy Class to older adults on Zoom nine hours per week, plus 1.5 hours of prep. time. Ability to teach practical language skills for daily living. Enjoys teaching songs in English. Proficient in English and Cantonese is preferred. Send resumes to eyamanoha@felton.org.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

Felton's Tech Squad is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities in the Richmond and Sunset districts. Ask questions regarding how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop. Drop-in for a one-on-one session:

- Friday, Jan. 6, 1:30 -3:30 p.m. at the Richmond Library (351 Ninth Ave.)
- Friday, Jan. 13, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Anza Library (550 37th Ave./Geary)
- Friday, Jan. 27, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Ortega Library (3223 Ortega St.).

For more information, call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy January birthday to Lois Anderson, Kyle Buckley, Mark Craig, Chiara Di Martino, Alex and Alice Doliner, Ilze Earner, Caroline King, Kyle Kisor, Alexander Mullaney, Phyllis Nabhan, Kiran Nagaraja, Olivia Neel, Renata Ruby Rhodes, Caley Rittman, Linda Shore, Bonnie Sill, Nelly Soncuya, Adriana Sosa and Jeremy Wong. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

LEARN TO SQUARE DANCE

The Caper Cutters invite you to join us for Social Square Dancing! Two free introductory classes on Jan. 9 and 16, followed by a 12-class series ($50/person, $75/couple). We hope to see you there! The class is from 7-8:30 p.m. Enter the parking lot at 353 23rd Ave. Find us on FB and Meetup.

MOVIES IN THE RICHMOND: 4 STAR HISTORY AND MORE

Local historian Woody LaBounty will appear at the 4 Star Theater on Jan. 29 at 5 p.m. to give an illustrated talk on the Richmond District's movie theater history. Using historical photos, programs and ads, the virtual tour will visit the long-gone Palm nickelodeon at Sixth Avenue and Clement Street, the blockbuster-hosting Coronet on Geary Boulevard, the Egyptian-themed Alexandria, the beloved Balboa and the fantastic 4 Star Theater, which originally opened as the La Bonita in 1913. LaBounty is a researcher, writer and co-founder of the Western Neighborhoods Project (outsidelands.org), a 23-year-old nonprofit focused on the history of western San Francisco. He was recently vice president of Advocacy and Programs at San Francisco Heritage and writes weekly on city history at SanFranciscoStory.com. Tickets are available at https://www.4-star-movies.com/calendar-of-events/movies-in-the-richmond-4-star-history-and-more. Learn more at SanFranciscoStory.com. Contact LaBounty at woody@woodylabounty.com.

OUTER SUNSET FARMERS MARKET AND MERCANTILE

Join us at our weekly Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile, Sundays 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on 37th Avenue at Ortega Street featuring local farmers, highly acclaimed food trucks/vendors, makers, merchants, artists and causes, plus live music, children's activities, yoga and Wednesday storytelling. Go to sunsetmercantilesf.com or call 415-465-2475 for more details. Note new hours: the market will now close at 2 p.m.

PHOTOGRAPHER FOR HIRE

Tyrone Bartoli has been a professional photographer since 1995. He is available for a wide range of photo shoots. Call for a free consultation: 415-846-7838. Also, check out his Instagram page @tyronebartoli. Ask for the Sunset Beacon discount. Learn more at TyroneBartoli.com.

ROSE PRUNING DEMONSTRATION

Join the San Francisco Rose Society in the Golden Gate Park Rose Garden for the annual winter pruning demonstration. Rose expert Kleyton will be on hand to provide demonstrations on correctly pruning your rose in order for it to perform well and remain healthy through the growing season. There will also be short workshops on how to start a new rose plant from a trim or cut from the prunings. Consulting rosarians will be on hand to answer your questions. Sunday, Jan. 8, noon-1:30 p.m. Free. For more information go to sfrosesociety.org., email sfrosesociety@gmail.com or call 415-656-4346. Contact: Maryanne Razzo.

SALES REPRESENTATIVE WANTED

A commissioned sales position is available for a positive, friendly, outdoing sales representative for the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. Great project for someone looking to earn some extra cash. Flexible schedule and no sales quotas. It is also a great way tomeet people and learn more about our terrific neighborhoods. Plus, you will get to see your name in the newspapers in the staff box each month! Experience preferred, but not required. Email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

SEEKING A PLACE TO LIVE

Senior lady seeks a living accommodation for under $1,000 per month in a private residence. Quiet, excellent live-in references. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know has extra space in west area of San Francisco.

SF METAL BAND SPORZ RELEASES DEBUT ALBUM "FIG LIVES"

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! San Francisco metal band SPORZ releases their debut album titled "Fig Lives"! Reviews just in say "One part bouncy, two parts evil," with Chef Justice reporting "I'm getting some Melvins on the nose with hints of Mastodon." Album now available on all streaming platforms and Bandcamp. Extra! Extra! Sporz! Sporz! Sporz!

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying the "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to the Sunset Beacon readers who generously donated to the Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper campaign. Your contribution will help keep us financially healthy. To donate, please send a check to: Sunset Beacon, P.O. Box 16035, SF, CA, 94116 or send via PayPal to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Thank you!

Announcements: $1 per word, 20 word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. We support small businesses:

FREE: There is no charge for occasional announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,000 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (more than 20,000 views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

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The San Francisco Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
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Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

New Laws for 2023

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. From local food drives to neighborhood festivities, it was nice to see our community get into the spirit.

2022 was a successful legislative year for me, with many of my bills taking effect on Jan. 1. At the top of the list are two of bills that aim to bring more fairness and equity in the way some of our traffic violations are handled.

The most significant is how jaywalking will be enforced throughout California. AB-2147 ("The Freedom To Walk Act") allows people to safely cross the street outside of an intersection when the roadway is clear of moving vehicles. Law enforcement will still be able issue a citation if the pedestrian is causing a hazard.

Jaywalking tickets have been disproportionately given to people of color. Sometimes, such police encounters can turn deadly or lead to serious injury. These consequences are just too great. In addition, the fines are ridiculous and can total hundreds of dollars, severely hurting the budgets of lower-income families.

Crossing the street shouldn't be a crime. The auto industry pushed jaywalking laws nearly a century ago, which only serve them, not pedestrians. I'm glad we're starting to re-evaluate our streets and prioritizing walkers. Virginia already prohibits officers from stopping a pedestrian just for jaywalking. And in Nevada, it's no longer considered a misdemeanor.

Next, AB-2594, seeks to reform the way late fees and penalties are assessed for bridge and road tolls. When the system completely removed cash toll takers and moved to 100 percent FasTrak at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it left unbanked individuals with very few options to pay without a credit or debit card. The added late fees and penalties to unpaid balances grew exponentially. In one instance, an East Bay driver's balance reached more than $30,000. Only $2,500 of that was in actual toll fees.

Starting Jan. 1, agencies must notify violators of a new program coming this summer that allows late fees and penalties to be waived if drivers settle their toll balances. They must also create in-person payment opportunities. In addition, the DMV must notify customers changing their driver's license address to also do so on their vehicle registration, so that notices go to the right place.

On the environmental front, consumers will see safer fast food packaging in the new year. AB-1200 bans PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, from to-go containers and wrappers that are often used to keep grease and other liquids from leaking out. It was passed in 2021, but companies were given until 2023 to comply.

PFAS is a class of roughly 9,000 man-made chemicals linked to health problems, including cancer, hormone disruption, thyroid disease and vaccine interference. When they come into contact with food, consumers ingest them. McDonald's, Taco Bell, Chipotle, Panera Bread, Whole Foods and Trader Joe's are already phasing out PFAS-laced wrappers, boxes and other similar products, or have committed to the goal. New York, Washington and Maine have enacted a similar law prohibiting the use of PFAS in food packaging.

I was sworn-in for my sixth and final two-year term about a month ago and will continue to prioritize making California a better state for everyone. If you have any ideas or feedback regarding the upcoming legislative year, please attend my Community Coffee on Saturday, Jan. 7 at 10 a.m. at the Geneva Car Barn, located at 2301 San Jose Ave. You can RSVP on my website: https://a19.asmdc.org/.

Here's to a great 2023.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Police Blotter

Assault: 1400 Block of 36th Avenue, Nov. 17, 9:33 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of an assault.

The victim said that they had been outside and speaking with a friend when the suspect, who had been living in a vehicle, was throwing out garbage. The victim confronted the suspect about the trash that was discarded, and the suspect responded by punching the victim.

The victim dodged the suspect and walked away.

Stolen Vehicle, Possession of Stolen Property: 1700 Block of Eighth Avenue, Nov. 20, 3:28 a.m.

Officers were on patrol when they observed a vehicle being broken into.

The officers deployed a spike strip and disabled the suspects' vehicle, which led to two suspects attempting to flee the scene on foot.

Both suspects were detained and arrested. A computer search revealed that the vehicle the suspects were driving had been reported as stolen.

Outstanding Warrant: 2500 Block of 15th Avenue, Nov. 25, 11:58 p.m.

The victim reported that they had been engaged in an argument with the suspect, the victim's co-worker and a roommate, when the suspect hit the victim on the head with an umbrella.

Responding officers detained the suspect. A computer check revealed an outstanding arrest warrant.

The suspect was arrested for the assault and warrant.

Vandalism: 2200 Block of Judah Street, Nov. 27, 2:02 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a vandalism incident.

The victim, the owner of a laundromat, told officers that a suspect had broken the side window of a door and walked away.

An hour later, the victim called dispatch and reported seeing the suspect in the area.

Officers arrived and located the suspect and detained her. A canister of pepper spray was located on the suspect.

The suspect was arrested.

Robbery: 2300 Block of Noriega Street, Nov. 28, 10:28 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a robbery.

The victim, an employee, observed the suspect trying to shoplift. The victim confronted the suspect and the suspect pulled something out of his waistband. The victim and the suspect struggled for the item and the item dropped on the ground. The victim realized it was a firearm and grabbed it. The suspect fled the scene with some merchandise.

Officers inspected the firearm and determined it to be a replica.

Battery: 1300 Block of Ninth Avenue, Dec. 3, 12:55 p.m.

The victim reported that they had been trying to park their vehicle when a delivery truck blocked the entrance to a parking lot.

The victim confronted the suspect, the delivery driver, and an argument ensued.

During the argument, the victim attempted to walk away, but the suspect followed then pepper sprayed the victim.

Battery: 1700 Block of 22nd Avenue, Dec. 4, 6:04 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of an incident of battery.

The victim reported that they had been in an argument with the suspect over money. The suspect was previously the victim's friend and currently a roommate.

The suspect entered the victim's room in an attempt to look for valuable items and selected the victim's watch and jacket to take. The suspect and then pepper sprayed the victim.

Brandishing a Weapon: 1700 Block of 22nd Avenue, Dec. 4, 9:14 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of an incident of battery, which was related to an incident that had occurred earlier in the evening.

The victim stated that they were concerned over their daughter's argument with her roommate and went to check on her. The victim then had an argument with the suspect, the roommate's father, who was also in the building.

During the argument, the suspect punched and pointed a gun at the victim. The said the suspect stated that they thought the victim was also in possession of a weapon.

The suspect then left the building.

Battery: 700 Block of Irving Street, Dec. 6, 8:40 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a suspect armed with a knife.

The victim stated that they walked into a restaurant and recognized the suspect, who was known to the victim, and three of the suspect's friends. A verbal argument ensued between the victim and the suspects before the victim exited the restaurant.

The suspects followed the victim outside and assaulted the victim. One of the suspects then went to their vehicle and returned with a knife, which they swung threateningly at the victim.

Robbery: 1500 Block of Irving Street, Dec. 9, 4:44 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a physical altercation.

The victim reported that the suspect was discovered inside the building lobby and was asked to leave. The suspect responded angrily and assaulted the victim, then stole the victim's keys.

Despite the suspect refusing to comply, spitting on the officers and moving away from them, responding officers detained the suspect.

A search of the suspect revealed the victim's keys in the suspect's possession.

The suspect was arrested.

Brandishing a Weapon: 2300 Block of Taraval Street, Dec. 19, 12:36 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of a suspect brandishing a gun.

The victim reported that they had been inside when they observed the suspect rummaging in their vehicle, that was parked outside.

The victim yelled at the suspect through a window and the suspect responded by turning and brandishing a gun at the victim before walking away.

Vandalism: Wawona Street and 46th Avenue, Dec. 22, 7:08 a.m.

The witness, a Muni driver, reported that the suspect wanted to board the bus, but it was not scheduled to leave. The suspect became angry and hit one of the bus's windows with a nearby garbage can.

Responding officers located and detained the suspect.

After further investigation, the suspect was arrested.

Threats, Brandishing a Weapon, Outstanding Warrant: 19th Avenue and Taraval Street, Dec. 26, 7:42 p.m.

The victim stated that they were driving when they honked at a vehicle in front of them that was blocking traffic.

The suspect then ran up to the victim and brandished a knife.

Responding officers arrived at the location and detained the suspect.

A computer search revealed an outstanding arrest warrant.

The suspect was arrested.

Other Avenues
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Happy New Year!

Lhola Amira

Continued from page 1

wrap and black platform heels, spent quality time with each person in a moving feet-cleansing ritual. THEY knelt before them on a red velvet pillow, methodically washing and massaging their feet. Then Amira quietly spoke to each person. The caring interactions ended with THEM placing the socks on their feet.

The repetitive choral music in the background was more ominous than soothing.

"The music is a collage of sounds with traditional instruments and the artist's voice woven in," said South African-born Becker, who worked closely with Amira for more than a year on Facing the Future. "It's haunting and a kind of mourning."

Right after Amira had finished the feet washing ceremony with one woman, the participant began weeping. Another woman in the circle spontaneously walked over to give the crying woman a long, comforting embrace.

At first, the cocktail-sipping crowd seemed a bit uncomfortable and perplexed by the intimate ceremony they were witnessing. But soon, many became transfixed.

"Many people at the reception expressed their appreciation to me. They responded to the performative aspect, but Amira views it as a gift. It was an incredible gesture of love and healing," Becker said. "And what people conveyed to me about the exhibition was they were filled with awe and wonder."

Another participant in the ceremony, Melvin Phillips, 68, who was born and raised in Oakland, said he felt physically and spiritually uplifted by the experience. As a public safety officer at the de Young, he was able to meet Amira a couple of days before the event and was asked to be part of it.

Amira's art evolved from South African Nguni spirituality, a combination of Christianity with traditional values, adapted tradition for today's world. Phillips, who has spent a lot of time studying African spirituality, as well as being a devoted member of Allen Temple Baptist Church of Oakland, felt an instant connection with Amira.

"The ceremony was very humbling because it was honoring my ancestors – my mother and my mother's mother," he said. "It was a tradition in my mother's family to have your feet washed going back four generations."

While Amira washed and massaged his feet, Phillips, who recently became a grandfather, said a prayer, calling out his ancestors by name.

"I felt empowered to continue to represent my people. It was very inspiring."

Amira encouraged Phillips to ring a bell when he sensed an ancestor's presence in the moment.

"I felt the energy from Lhola's hands to my feet. It was like jazz improvisation. My feet had been hurting all day and I felt my strength coming back."

Upon entering the Facing the Future exhibition, visitors will find a large bowl of coarse salt on a table. They are encouraged to place their hands in the bowl.

"The salt in OUR work is inviting the ocean into the space as a place that is both a cleansing ground and a grave site," Amira said. "Salt has healing properties that cleanse and clear out space so that a portal of connection can open. WE work with salt as a holding material that can absorb the wound/woundedness so that energetically one is prepared for a healing to occur."

The beaded panels in the exhibit contain just as much symbolism and meaning. They are referred to as "constellations" (rather than the more static term, "installations") by the artist. "OUR work is a constellation because it exists in the intersection of the past, present and future," Amira said.

"Constellation is a way of marking time as memory, and the act of remembering as a repeating process held at different timelines with different consequences and/or effects."

Every visitor will surely take away something different from the exhibit. The artist's hope is that they created a tender place where people "are brave enough to hold the wound" and be open to healing with a "healthy imagination of what the future can bring."

The constellations are handmade by South African women, ages 18 to 90, which is consistent with the generational themes of the exhibit. The newly created, site-specific spiritual portals called, "Philisa: Zinza Mphefumlo Wami," are meant to be sacred spaces for honoring ancestors and healing.

"The women sing together and tell stories," Becker said. "Each bead has been touched by those women. That says something beautiful about how many people this art touches."

The solo exhibition, "Lhola Amira: Facing the Future," will be at the de Young Museum through Dec. 3, 2023. For more information, go to famsf.org.

Natasha Becker, curator of African art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, worked with Lhola Amira for more than a year creating the "Facing the Future" exhibit. ***Photo by Noma Faingold.***

'Then and Now': Taraval Street and 33rd Avenue

Above: This southwest view at 33rd Avenue and Taraval Street shows Ring's Market in 1951. ***Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.***

Right: The building is now home to Cal Insurance (next door to the Four Deuces bar). The distinctive tower at the building's northeast corner is long gone. It looks similar to something that might be designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. ***Photo taken in December, 2022, by Michael Durand.***

Kilduff's Korner by Paul Kilduff

"Clearly, we must preserve this fine example of 'New Formalism' at Stonestown. Now then, on to Shake Shack."

JAMES J. RUSSO, CPA

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City Hall

Supervisor Gordon Mar

Reflecting on 4 Years of Progress

As we start a new year, I'm passing the baton to Joel Engardio as the new supervisor for District 4. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to serve the Sunset and San Francisco for the past four years. We have spent four years achieving real material wins for working people, changing the trajectory of the Sunset and challenging what is considered possible for this seat, this District and this City.

When I took office, District 4 had the worst housing production record of any District, losing more affordable housing than we had built. Together, we spearheaded the first 100% affordable housing project for working families at 2550 Irving St., the first homeless outreach services with the Sunset CareVan, and the first permanent supportive housing and affordable housing acquisitions ever in the Sunset. And just this fall, we broke ground on the first 100% affordable teacher housing project in the entire City at Shirley Chisholm Village.

We had the vision to create the Sunset Chinese Cultural District, the City's first cultural heritage district on the west side, and the first focused on the cultural and economic vitality of San Francisco's Chinese American community. I'm excited to see this new institution continue to grow and develop in the years to come and foster more community connections, events and opportunities for our entire neighborhood.

Upper Great Highway

I'm proud that we had the imagination to envision and create the Great Highway Park at the beginning of the pandemic, and transform our western waterfront for community building, public art, civic action and active transportation. This was a deeply divisive issue, and it's one we never shied away from. We worked to broker compromises and find common ground, without losing sight of the long-term realities of climate change and its impacts on our waterfront. I'm proud that one of the final legislative accomplishments our office delivered was passing the Great Highway Pilot Ordinance, keeping in place the promenade on weekends and holidays for the next three years, and requiring city departments to conduct broad public outreach, extensive traffic planning, regular data collection and to finally create a comprehensive sand management plan. The long-term future of the Upper Great Highway is still yet to be determined, and I look forward to seeing what's on the road ahead, thanks to our work with the community to find creative solutions and create new possibilities.

Outer Sunset Farmers Market

I'm also incredibly proud of our partnership with Sunset Mercantile to create and launch the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile. This was an idea that came up during our 2018 campaign, and we made it an early priority when we entered office. It would have been easier to bring in an existing farmers market – some bigger, less local business that could have quickly set up shop. But with Sunset Mercantile, we took the bolder and more difficult path of building a wholly independent market from scratch. The result is a unique neighborhood gem that was truly built by and for the Sunset. It has been an immense joy to watch this market grow and flourish, and to see how broadly and deeply it has been embraced by the neighborhood.

Meeting the Community's Needs

Each of these new neighborhood institutions – the Sunset Chinese Cultural District, Great Highway Park and Outer Sunset Farmers Market — started as ideas on how to meet long-held needs of our community. They took vision and courage and commitment to create, and each has transformed our neighborhood in unique ways, and highlighted the core common thread of my time as supervisor – a sincere effort to bring people together.

We had the conviction to fight for funding for our Climate Action Plan and getting District 4 its fair share in resources. This includes historic investments for Sunset Boulevard that will continue to benefit our neighborhood for years to come, creating a dedicated gardening and landscaping team, and finally beginning the work to convert the Boulevard's irrigation system to recycled water. During difficult budget years, we also secured millions in funding for STEAM grants for all District 4 schools, for college and career readiness programs for all high schools, for new initiatives supporting our small businesses and artists, and, with the support of Assemblymember Phil Ting, for major renovation and expansion of the South Sunset Senior Center and creating a new senior center on Taraval.

We had the courage to take on corporate special interests to write and pass the strongest dark-money disclosure law in the nation, and tripled the impact of the public financing program to uplift the voice of the working class in our local politics. I fought for and secured a decade of full funding for Free City College, protected public teachers' pay, and fulfilled a key campaign promise when we brought City College classes to the Sunset.

We fought for new labor rights, expanded paid leave for hundreds of thousands of essential workers, and helped thousands of laid off San Francisco workers regain employment during the pandemic. We wrote and passed groundbreaking laws to prevent crime and make our communities safer; we led community-based programs to provide community ambassadors, safety escorts for seniors and home security upgrades. We led dozens of traffic calming measures, brought bikeshare to District 4, kept the L-Taraval Improvement Project on schedule and on budget, created the D4 Daylighting Initiative and the District 4 Mobility Study. We passed groundbreaking policies for veterans, expanding their access to park facilities and affordable housing, and protecting the pay of military reservists.

While our time in office is coming to a close, our impact isn't. Sunset Forward will help inform the next decade of housing planning, and projects from our District 4 Mobility Study, including a new community shuttle, Sunset Neighborways, plans for a westside subway, and our citywide School Access Plan will move forward.

My work fighting for working people and progress didn't begin when I entered this office, and it won't end as I leave it. I've been in this movement for decades; I'm not going anywhere. We face immense challenges, and I am deeply humbled and inspired by the thousands of District 4 residents who voted for our work and vision, and the hundreds of volunteers who powered our campaign.

Achieving lasting change for a fairer and more equal City doesn't always happen in the span of an election cycle, and we have a responsibility to keep fighting – not just for the next campaign, but for the next generation. The work continues.

Gordon Mar is the outgoing District 4 representative on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Quentin Kopp

Continued from page 6

ing to below 55,000 readers, lost its acclaiming historian, Gary Kamiya, who quit last November after editors suppressed the first of a two-part column about North Beach's history which included criminal conduct by mostly Italian immigrants in environs like Filbert, Stockton, Grant, Greenwich and Union streets. (In the 1930s, North Beach contained about 57,000 residents of Italian descent – 27,000 born in Italy, 30,000 in America). Kamiya published 314 pieces in Chronicle from 2013 to 2022. He quit after Chronicle editors deleted the first part of his two columns which included history of Saints Peter and Paul Church and Father Oreste Trinchiere's good works in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Why? Because the Chronicle claimed his writing described "new entire ethnicity of hoodlums." Kamiya, who rightfully charges the Chronicle with censoring history, now publishes in the Examiner, which is free, and I recommend it to all readers.

I conclude with two more examples of language witlessness. Eileen O'Connor, a Washington, D.C. tax lawyer, points out that the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a resolution on Jan. 4, 2021, mandating so-called "gender inclusive language." The resolution forbids common words, to wit, "Strike 'father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, father-in-law and mother-in-law' and insert 'parent, child, sibling, spouse, and parent-in-law' ... Strike 'himself or herself' and insert 'themselves.'"

Republicans can adopt a rule deleting such absurdities because every Congress enacts rules under which it will function during that new session this month. Don't, however, imitate Stanford University which last May issued orders prohibiting words from its websites and computer code and identifying replacements such as "U.S. citizen" for "American" because you might slight the rest of the Americans. You can't "master" your course because "historically, masters enslaved people." Don't say "gangbusters" because that word "invokes the notion of police action against 'gangs' in a positive light, which may have racial undertones." Stanford labels the foregoing as "The Elimination of Harmful Language" effort which consumed "18 months of collaboration with stakeholder groups." Stanford tuition is about $65,000 annually for some 17,000 students who are tended by 15,750 administrative staff and 2,288 faculty members. No thanks!

"Moses was a great law giver. The way he was satisfied to keep the Ten Commandments short and to the point shows ... he was not an ordinary lawyer." Thus, sayeth an astute wag. Your scribe awaits a new Congressional session and the return of our Board of Supervisors from another one-month vacation for these $148,118 per year salaried servants of the people.

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, member of the SF Ethics Commission and retired judge.

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Upper Great Hwy.

Continued from page 1

The Upper Great Highway was closed to vehicles in April of 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been under the current configuration since August 2021. Mar says this will give city officials time to make transportation improvements on the west side, improve traffic circulation, expand transit service and to study and measure what happens to trip patterns after the Great Highway extension south of Sloat closes to vehicles permanently in 2024.

"We can keep what works and can keep working on it," Mar said. "This legislation probably gives no one exactly what they want. It's a genuine compromise reflecting years of outreach and input and it strikes a careful balance."

The defeat of Proposition I in November, which would have returned the Upper Great Highway to its vehicles only pre-pandemic condition, opened the door for the SF Board of Supervisors to codify, meaning to put into the Rec. and Park Code, the current schedule.

District 7 Supervisor Myrna Melgar, however, was opposed to the Friday at noon closure to cars.

Melgar mentioned that she is a "card-carrying member of the Bicycle Coalition." She advocates for car-free spaces and opposed Proposition I, which would have ended the "promenade" and opened the Great Highway up to car traffic 24/7 like it was before the pandemic.

"Nevertheless, if you look at the vote totals of Prop. I in District 7, District 1, District 4 … there were pockets of folks who were not in agreement and they are very strongly in disagreement," Melgar said. "We are approving a pilot project, and in three years … we're going to need these people to implement a permanent compromise and I do not understand why we would antagonize a bunch of folks in my district when we're going to need them in three years to put a permanent compromise forward.

"We want to eventually see a future where we adapt to climate change or we have more car-free spaces, and that's going to require negotiation," she said. "I can honestly say that that wasn't done, at least with my office, in terms of the hours."

Melgar expressed some of her constituents' concerns.

"I have been hearing for the past couple of years how families who have to get the soccer fields in Golden Gate Park on Friday afternoons, which is when soccer happens, have a really hard time because all of the traffic is redirected," she explained. "I have been hearing about folks who need to get to the VA Hospital, both staff and patients. So, I do not want to antagonize a large section of my constituents, when we could have done something to alleviate the most contentious issue, which is the noon closure on Fridays."

She then moved for an amendment to start closing the highway to cars at 6 a.m. on Saturdays, then open it up for traffic on Mondays at 6 a.m. District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan seconded her motion.

"I have a different experience as to what Supervisor Mar has described in the last two years," Chan said. "While the Outer Richmond is not the majority … I ought to speak for them because their concerns are legitimate.

"Thinking about the Veterans Hospital, thinking about schools, thinking about all these families that have to do the north-south travel, thinking about the experience when we have park closures, like Outside Lands or Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, it's difficult for (residents of) the Richmond, particularly the Outer Richmond, to travel (in a) north-south direction. It doesn't make sense to have a closure at noon if the goal is so that we can support parents traveling in a north-south direction," she said.

"The (Friday at) noon closure was not a consensus. It was determined," Chan explained. "Supervisor Mar, I guess, decided that, because I wasn't involved in the decision, nor were many of my constituents involved in the decision for a noon closure. At the end of the day, the people who live there, the ones that are being impacted, should have a say about their neighborhoods."

She said her role as supervisor is to build consensus.

"I've got to be able to balance it out, both perspectives, and helping my constituents instead of pitting them against each other, to find a solution that is workable."

Chan referenced an article in the San Francisco Chronicle reporting that air quality has actually worsened on 19th Avenue but has shown very little improvement on the Great Highway.

"I don't think that changes to Great Highway alone are a silver bullet. We've got to talk about (the) big picture," she said.

Supervisor Melgar spoke again about the hours.

"I am hoping that we don't extend this fight for three years unnecessarily; that we can come up with a compromise that works for more people while keeping the Great Highway closed on weekends, which was the intention of the compromise," Melgar said. "I was in that room when we came up with that compromise. The noon closure was not part of that compromise. That was something that happened later when Rec. and Park operationalized the compromise.

"When we initially said it, it was going to be closed on the weekends and holidays and then available for people to commute on the weekdays."

Mar responded that during the last 18 months people have adjusted to the closure of the Upper Great Highway on the weekends, so congestion is not as bad as it was at first.

"Sunset Boulevard is still available for them." Mar said. "The traffic volume on Sunset Boulevard is still below what it was pre-pandemic. Also, as part of the Golden Gate Park access plan, we've created a release valve for the traffic on Chain-of-Lakes Drive that now allows the southbound traffic to be able to take MLK Drive and have a direct connection to Sunset Boulevard, so that has helped."

The SF Board of Supervisors passed and ordinance to keep the current schedule for the closed-to-cars Upper Great Highway for the next three years. Pedestrians, bicyclists, strollers and dog walkers will have the roadway to themselves from noon on Fridays until 6 a.m. on Mondays through 2025. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

Mar said they should keep the Friday at noon closure.

Melgar and Chan's amendment to close the Upper Great Highway to vehicles at 6 a.m. on Saturdays instead of noon on Fridays failed by an 8-3 vote, with Board President Shamann Walton joining them.

The ordinance then passed on a 9-2 vote, with supervisors Melgar and Chan voting against it.

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